

Thank you all for coming. God bless, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the Pepsi Coliseum at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Frank O'Bannon and State Attorney General Steve Carter of Indiana; Mayor Bart Peterson of Indianapolis; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

### Remarks in Pierce City, Missouri

May 13, 2003

Thank you all very much. It is my honor to be here. Can you hear me back there? It is my honor to be here with some of our country's finest citizens. I am sorry I'm here under such circumstances.

I first want to thank the mayor for his hospitality and helping to arrange my visit. I want to thank the good Father for opening up this place of worship, this house of God, to help those who suffer. I find it—and I hope you do—uplifting that in the midst of tragedy, amongst people who have lost their homes, in some cases their loved one, or their businesses, lost their possessions, that we gather to comfort each other and to find help in the house of the Lord, because it's with His strength and His prayer that you'll find the sustenance to go on.

One of the things that struck me as I worked through the crowd here, shaking as many hands as I could, was that the people here who have been affected by the storm are ready to move on, are ready to pick up their lives, and are ready to do everything they can to convert this tragedy into good. Folks want to rebuild their—the feed man told me, he said, “I got wiped out, but I'm starting tomorrow to rebuild my company.” And there's no doubt you will, because there's a lot of people that want to help you.

And for the volunteers who are here, the people who have taken time out of your lives—the Red Cross or the Salvation Army or the church groups or the USA Freedom Corps people—I want to thank you very much for helping your neighbor in need.

I'm asking the FEMA people and the Governor and the mayor and everybody, I said, “Is the Government moving fast enough?” That's the question that I need to know. And

some of you said, “yes,” and some of you said, “no.” And for the ones who said, “no,” we will do everything we can to get you the—what you're owed. We'll process the paperwork as fast as possible, and if you qualify for help, they'll get you the help. That's what we're supposed to be doing.

So one of my visits—one of the reasons I'm visiting here is to ask the question, you know, to people. Because if there's—moving too slow or people are saying one thing and the other thing is not happening, now is the time to find out.

But the other real reason is to let you know there's a lot of Americans who are praying for you. A lot of people around this country saw the devastation—they didn't see what I've seen, because they—you can't tell how bad it is until you actually come here to Pierce City and see it yourself. You can't realize what it's like to see a tornado go right down the main street of a town and just wipe it out. It's hard to envision. But a lot of people know you're suffering, and a lot of people are praying for you, and a lot of people care for you. And a lot of people wish you all the best.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the parish hall at St. Mary's Catholic Church. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Mark Peters of Pierce City. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters in Pierce City

May 13, 2003

#### Devastation in Pierce City

**The President.** This is this man's business. They built their business last year. They had a family restaurant. They had a family restaurant. The children worked in it. And their lives got turned upside-down in one minute. This whole town, this whole street got wiped out. The tornado just came straight down the street.

And the only thing I can tell a man who has lost it all and a lady who has lost it all in one moment is, is that a lot of people are praying for them, and our Government is

going to try to do our best. But if you look in his eyes, you can see that—the devastation that took place, when you lose something—all you own overnight. The good news is his family is still standing, and he's strong. God bless you. God bless you.

**Q.** What's your name?

**Mr. Rector.** Scott Rector. This is my wife, Lynette.

**The President.** Rector—2002 is when he realized his dream.

**Mr. Rector.** It's going to say, again in 2003, here in about 5, 6 months. [*Laughter*]

**The President.** Yes. Oh, Mike [Mike Allen, Washington Post], okay. We'll get you in a minute. Any questions, or anything?

#### **Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia**

**Q.** Sir, do you think that the bombing in Saudi Arabia was the fault of Al Qaida?

**The President.** Well, there's a lot of suspicion it is Al Qaida. Al Qaida is a group of people that they don't care about taking innocent life. And obviously, these killers didn't care about innocent life. And we'll find out. We'll find out. We're going to find out.

**Q.** Sir, are you satisfied with the cooperation the Saudis have given you? And do you believe they did all they could to prevent this?

**The President.** Well, we'll let the facts—we'll sort the facts out and find out what the facts are. Colin Powell is over there now, and I'm confident, when I get back to Washington tomorrow, that George Tenet of the CIA will give me a full briefing of what we know. And we'll just find out. Let me get back to Washington and sort through the facts.

**Q.** Are you going to pull more Americans out of Saudi Arabia?

**The President.** Let me get back to Washington, find out the facts. We'll assess all the threats. We'll take the necessary precautions. But one thing is for certain: The people that killed the Americans and other innocent life will be tracked down, and they will be brought to justice. It doesn't matter how long it takes. The war on terror goes on. And this incident in Saudi Arabia shows the country that we still have got a war to fight. And we will fight it, and we will win it.

Just like the people of this city are going to rebuild this city, this country is going to defend our security and fight these terrorists.

**Q.** This bombing looked like it was pretty well-planned.

**The President.** It was very well-planned, yes.

**Q.** So these guys have a little bit of money, they have some infrastructure—

**The President.** It doesn't take much money to put a car bomb together. It takes hatred. It takes hatred in your heart. It takes an absolute disregard for innocent life. And that's the nature of Al Qaida. I can't say for certain it was Al Qaida yet, but I wouldn't be surprised if it was.

**Q.** Do you think Iran—

**The President.** Iraq?

**Q.** Iran.

#### **President's Visit to Pierce City**

**The President.** Oh, I have no idea. Look, it's way too early. Let me get back to Washington and get the facts, and we'll work on it. In the meantime, my heart is right here in Pierce City, Missouri, with the people whose lives were destroyed as a result of a tornado that swept down this street.

And let me say one thing about what I saw at the church. I saw not only a determined group of citizens, but I saw a group of volunteers from all over this State, and even some from Texas, I want you to know, that they want to help them. And for that, I'm grateful, and I know their Nation is as well. There's a lot of love in this country.

**Q.** There were so many storms, all of a sudden, unlike anything you've seen before.

**The President.** That's what happens sometimes. You know? That's just what happens sometimes. Weather patterns change. And you know, I'm from Texas, where we had the Jarrell tornado came and just wiped out the city of Jarrell. They hadn't had a tornado in that part of the State in a long time, and lo and behold, one shows up, and people lost their life.

**Q.** Do you think the Government is doing enough?

**The President.** Well, that's what I'm here to ask. And I want to make sure FEMA responds quickly. I've been told by the Governor he's satisfied. The mayor has told me

that he believes we're moving fast enough. But I'm moving out of the councils of government. I'm trying to get directly to the people to find out. And there's—a lot of people are content, and some people are frustrated.

Yes, ma'am.

**Q.** So many people here didn't have insurance—

**The President.** That's right, and we're going to have to deal with that.

**Q.** Is there money available that's not a loan for these people?

**The President.** Well, we have—we'll just have to figure it out, take a look and see. But you're right, there's a lot—a lot of the homes were insured, and a lot of the businesses weren't. And as you can see, this street right here, all the commerce in this entire town was wiped out. The mayor was talking about what it means to be trying to run a city that has got no sales tax revenue because nobody can buy anything because the businesses are destroyed.

And this is devastation—complete devastation here in Pierce City, and that's what we're here to—listen. We've got the people from the Federal Government all over it. The people from the State Government are listening to people's complaints. And we'll just see the best we can do. I am not going to make a promise to these good people that won't be fulfilled. So I'm here to listen, first of all.

### ***Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia***

**Q.** Were you surprised at this attack could take place a year-and-a-half—after a year-and-a-half of—

**The President.** No, I'm not surprised. Al Qaida—until Al Qaida is completely brought to justice, they want to hurt Americans and our friends and allies. And so we'll do everything we can to secure the homeland, and we'll do the best we can to make sure people can't come into our country and hurt us. But the best way to secure the homeland is to chase these killers down, one at a time, and bring them to justice, which is the policy of the Bush administration and will be the policy of the Bush administration for a long—hopefully, a long time. I know so long as I'm the President, we will deal with these people.

That's the only way to secure the country. And so these—they'll hit and run, and they'll try to hide. We're going to get them.

### ***Texas Legislature***

**Q.** Sir, you mentioned Texas. Have you been following what's going on in the Texas legislature?

**The President.** I have not.

**Q.** Democrats leaving the State to avoid a vote—

**The President.** No, I haven't—[laughter]—but I'm confident my friend, that Governor Perry will be able to deal with it.

Why don't we get out of the rain? Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:30 p.m. during a tour of the city. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Holden of Missouri; Mayor Mark Peters of Pierce City; and Gov. Rick Perry of Texas. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Executive Order 13301—Increasing the Number of Members on the Intelligence Oversight Board**

*May 14, 2003*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 12863 of September 13, 1993, as amended by Executive Order 13070 of December 16, 1997, is further amended by deleting the word “four” from the first sentence of section 2.1 and inserting in its place the word “five”.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
May 14, 2003.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 16, 2003]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 19.